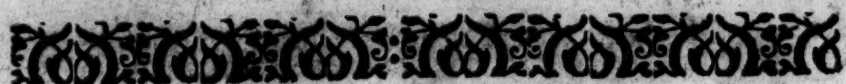


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The Reverend

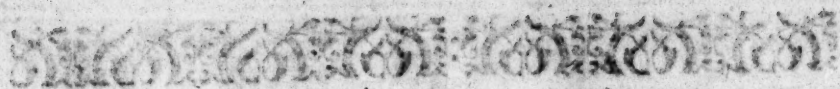
Mr. JACKSON's

SERMON

Preach'd at

BATH.





The Reverend

Mr. JACKSON'S

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Preach'd at

B. A. T. H.



*Of God's Benefits to Mankind, in
Healing all their Diseases.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D At
B A T H.

By JOHN JACKSON, M. A. Rector
of *Weston-Birt* in the County of *Gloucester*;
and Vicar of *Hullavington, Wilts.*

The SECOND EDITION.

To which is Added,
A LETTER to the AUTHOR, from the
late Dr. RICHARD BETTENSON of the *BATH*,
concerning his Successful METHOD of giving *Wine*,
&c. in the SMALL-POX.

WITH SOME
RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS on that Presumptive
Practice of *Inoculating* It.

L O N D O N :
Printed for JAMES LEAKE, Bookseller at *BATH*.
M.DCC.XXVIII.

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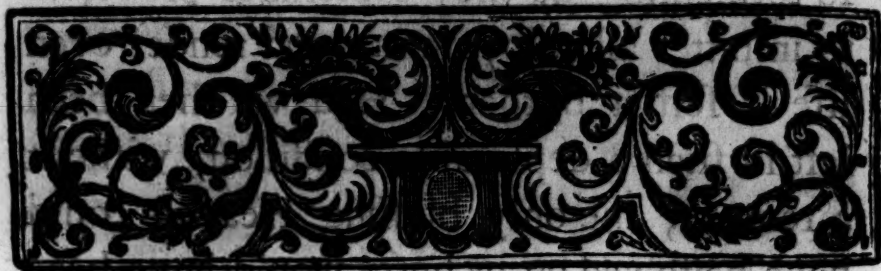
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RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS on that Prevalent
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L O N D O N

Printed for James Kneass, Bookseller, in BATH.





PSALM CIII. Ver. 3.

—Who healeth all thy Diseases.



HIS Psalm is one continued strain of thanks and praise to God for his wonderful *benefits* to mankind ; among which, 'tis none of the least, that he *healeth all their diseases*.

Thus the Psalmist begins, and thus he ends,
— *Bless the Lord, O my soul ! — Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all thine iniquity, who healeth all thy diseases.*

Sickness and pains of body are some of that baneful train of miseries, which entred the world upon the fall of man, as the con-

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sequence and punishment of his sin ; and so tormenting do they sometimes prove, as to imbitter all enjoyments, and render even life it self a burden. Had we then been left in such a deplorable condition, without a remedy, the only blessing Heaven could have bestowed on us here, wou'd have been the taking us out of this world as soon as

ii. 23. ever we came into it : for as *Job* says, *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul? Who longs for death, and it cometh not ; and digs for it more than for hid treasures.* But our most gracious Lord (blessed be his holy name) has provided better for us ; he not only saves our souls by *forgiving their iniquities*, but succours our bodies likewise by *healing all their diseases.*

The truth of which last proposition I intend to make evident in some particulars, and then shew how it ought to affect us.

1. As for the truth of the Psalmist's assertion, *That God healeth, &c.* it must be understood as spoken in general ; therefore, that it may not be without its particular exceptions in some cases of those diseases, wherein it pleases God (for wise ends of his providence,

in healing all their Diseases. 7

providence, best known to himself) to suffer men to linger on and die ; but when there are none of these ends to serve, we may assuredly expect the divine assistance one of these two ways ; either,

I. By an extraordinary act of Providence. Or;

II. The more ordinary course of Nature.

I. By an extraordinary act of Providence: I mean, when God heals diseases by his sole and immediate power, without the intervention of second causes, which are the usual means to this end : or else when he infuses a more than ordinary virtue into any of 'em, and so makes use of such as have in themselves no very natural efficacy for the purpose.

Now when God particularly influences and directs any means to work this effect ; when he orders and disposes things, by some secret and uncommon ways, for the patient's good, or heals him of himself ; we may well look upon it as an extraordinary act of Providence.

And whether this has been done, none can doubt, who believes those miraculous

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cures recorded in Scripture, wrought by God's holy Apostles and Prophets, who prov'd special Physicians of mens bodies as well as souls, and thereby have taught us, that both are under the peculiar care and protection of Heaven. And herein none were more eminent than the ever-blessed Son of God himself, who went about thus doing good : and in that compassion he so often shew'd to mens distress'd bodies, whilst he was on earth, he has given us assurance, that he'll not be wanting to us, if we seek to him in the like necessities, now he has all power and authority given him in Heaven. Nay, our Saviour has actually left a power behind him in his Church to this end, having commission'd his apostles and successors in the sacred ministry, *To heal the sick*, Luke ix. 2. which power (notwithstanding all miraculous effects of it are ceas'd, as 'tis in other matters) we can't believe will wholly fail, while there shall be need of it. Accordingly St. James leaves it a standing Rule to all Christians : *Is any sick among you ? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him. — And the prayer of faith shall save the sick,*
and

in healing all their Diseases. 9

and the Lord shall raise him up, — James v. 14, 15. Indeed it can hardly consist with God's fatherly tenderness and compassion to his creatures, to leave mankind languishing and pining away in their diseases, when all human means fail (as they often do in some stubborn distempers, which baffle the force of all medicines and the physician's skill) without some more than ordinary assistance from above to free 'em from their misery : And this assistance he most visibly affords in those distempers call'd *Epidemical*, that rise upon us like a flood, sweeping away thousands, patient and physician together ; and after having reign'd long uncontroul'd, are at last stopp'd in thir full course, and made to sink away as strangely as they rose at first ; which we must needs therefore attribute to an Almighty Power, both in the bringing and taking away : A Power which holds all the fatal treasures of diseases ; those fiery seeds of infection that sometimes by its permission break their bounds, and in a flaming deluge over-run the world, and are as soon recall'd at pleasure by it.

In case of more private distempers also in particular men, I believe there's scarce any
but

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but may find he receives more than ordinary relief from the divine goodness under 'em, which many times enables him, without other helps, to weather out the severest afflictions. Thus the Psalmist speaks of the

blessed man that considereth the poor.

xli. 3. *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* And to what other cause can we impute that happy crisis into which our oppress'd and fainting nature is often unexpectedly thrown, and so render'd capable of clearing off the morbidick matter, and enabled to repair its decays and weakneses, and work it self again into health and vigour? From whence, but Heaven, the fountain of all ease and comfort, can proceed those soft and gentle slumbers that fall on us in the most restless condition, when we are least of all inclin'd to 'em, allaying the heat and fury of the spirits, and diffusing their balmy life and refreshment thro' the whole body? God *thus giveth his beloved sleep.* Where shall we seek for the cause that one distemper, by the different turn of the humours, as it were, engenders another, which proves the patient's cure,
but

in healing all their Diseases. 11

but from that kind Almighty Being, who *brings good out of evil, strength out of weakness*, and acts quite differently from human methods?

Now these and many more observable instances of mens strange relief and recovery from their diseases, beyond all human probability and expectation, *their lives being redeem'd from destruction*, are convincing evidences of God's providence often interposing, in a more than ordinary manner, for their safety under 'em ; which is still more evident in those melancholy distempers of the mind, *that cast down our soul, and disquiet it within us* : for these having their foundation in the spirits, fix their root of bitterness so deep, that seldom any thing less than the influence of Him, who, as the Psalmist speaks, *restoreth the soul*, is sufficient to reach them.

And thus I shall dispatch the first evidence of the matter before us, which ought not wholly to be omitted, and to well-dispos'd minds may be very convincing ; tho' perhaps not so much to others, as what I am now about to offer, I hope, will,

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II. From the ordinary course of nature, wherein God has settled several standing ways and means, as second causes under him, to work the cure of our diseases. As,

1. The great number, and almost infinite variety of medicines that fill this lower world, which is God's great laboratory, from whence he dispenses his remedies for every bodily illness we are subject to : *The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth,* says the son of Syrach, *Ecclus. xxxviii. 4.* Indeed they cannot be attributed to any other cause, it being impossible they should spring by chance, or be no more than the effect of human art. As they came from God, so they were also design'd by him for the very ends they serve to. Now not to dispute with the Atheist, whether the world was accidentally jumbled into that order and beauty it now shines in, by the heedless concourse and rude rencounters of senseless atoms (which to believe, a man had need be as void of sense himself) I would know what shadow of reason there is to pretend, that the several parts of it heretofore should be impregnated with all the
fanative

in healing all their Diseases. 13

sanative qualities necessary for healing such a multitude of diseases, and still continue 'em after the same manner? This, every one sees, requires an allwise and provident Being, which perfectly foreknowing the several constitutions of mankind, could likewise see what different distempers they would all be liable to, and so contrive their cures. We may be likewise as sure, that these medicines were design'd by God for this very end, to heal our diseases, because otherwise he might have fram'd the world to answer the other uses and exigencies of our nature without 'em: Or they might have been sown so sparingly over the wild field of matter, as to have come to little: They might have been so blended and confus'd amidst the rude mass of other things, as not to be easily separated and extracted for human use; and after all, their virtues might have been so mean and flat, as to prevail little against acute and chronical distempers. These, together with a thousand other accidents, we might justly have expected would deprive us of the benefit of medicines, had not God design'd 'em for us. But now since none of 'em

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have happen'd, and they abound so plentifully every where, being easily distill'd from almost every herb and shrub, extracted from the very minerals, and even animals themselves too (many of which give us that life we take from 'em) their virtues also being very powerful, and capable of being greatly improv'd; we may well look upon all as God's wonderful provision (wherein we are daily making new discoveries) for the cure of our several distempers; and a better we can't imagine could have been made, than by such efficacious remedies every where ready at hand.

It must be confess'd indeed, we owe something to art many times, in ordering and compounding medicines: but this is no more than adding the virtue of one simple to strengthen or qualify that of another; and 'tis generally agreed too, that the fewer ingredients are mixt together, the better, a great many being apt to injure one another; which is as much as to say, The less of Art, and more of Nature we use, the disease is likeliest to be heal'd, and so God is still confess'd the chief Author of the cure.

Nay,

in healing all their Diseases. 15

Nay, God often does this for us too, preparing the remedy ready to our hands in the very Simple, as in those medicines call'd *Specificks*; where an herb, or other vegetable, contains such a peculiar virtue as prevails against some particular disease, beyond all the mixtures of the shop: So that these are remedies immediately order'd for us by the hand of the Divine Physician, which we need only take, and be heal'd, without more ado. They are, as it were, so many branches of the old tree of life still reserv'd amongst us, to shew that God has not yet forgot to be gracious, but that death shall be swallow'd up in victory at last. And perhaps they may be found too in greater abundance in those countries where the maladies, they especially heal, reign most: which if it prove true (as I am apt to believe upon diligent search great discoveries of this nature may be made) will shew the tender and watchful care of providence over us, in making the disease and remedy grow together, that as soon as the one injures, the other may be ready at hand to succour us. Something like this, Naturalists have discover'd in those noxious creatures, that

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yield a sovereign balsam against their own stinging.

And what shall we say?—when the common elements of Air and Water are wonderfully endow'd with variety of healing qualities, in some places especially above others. The Air in certain regions is of such an admirable refreshing and balsamick nature, as insensibly to convey healing to the lungs, make the blood and spirits brisk and florid, and even inspire a man with new life upon the brink of the grave. The Water also in many places (of which we who here so richly enjoy the blessing, can't be insensible) flows so strongly and nicely tinctur'd with the healing virtues of the several minerals thro' which 'tis strain'd, beyond all the infusions of art; that the Almighty author of nature hereby provides a constant *Bethesda* for us, to cure whatever disease we have: Here the lame are made to walk, the lepers are cleans'd, and the dead in effect rais'd to life and vigour: From hence even our very health receives improvement; our youth is renew'd as the eagle, as the Psalmist speaks; like her we in a manner molt our old case, and plume anew. And 'tis very remarkable

in healing all their Diseases. 17

ble of these last remedies, which come more immediately from the hand of God, that they are more expedite for the work and pleasing than others, most worthy the Divine Physician, working the cure when other means fail, and putting the patient on no nauseating doses or tedious courses; which shews, that when God undertakes us, we may expect not only necessities, but even delicacies, as * *Seneca* speaks. I need not say that even our common food, in a regular course of diet, very much contributes to our healing.

Thus I have consider'd the first means, whereby God in his ordinary providence heals our diseases, *viz.* the several productions of nature for that end. But before I proceed, it may be needful to remove a scruple, which is this: If God design'd these products of nature for our health, how comes it that some of 'em should have hurtful, nay poisonous qualities, and so be rather instruments of death than life?

To which I answer, That they are very few of this kind, and usually mark'd out to

* Neque enim necessitatibus tantummodo nostris provisum est, usque in delicias amamur. *De Ben.*

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us too by some ungrateful smell, or taste, or colour, or our own antipathies to 'em, which we may suppose first made 'em known to mankind, and still informs the brutes of 'em, so that 'twill be our own fault if we receive any injury from 'em. And yet after all, they are not so destructive as men may imagine, but indeed of sovereign use, when temper'd with other medicines; for outward application at least. A great many things in nature are capable, without due management, of doing us a great deal of harm; as Fire, for instance, which we esteem never the less beneficial to the world in general, tho' it may chance to burn the house over our heads; and I see no reason why we should not have the same opinion of those vegetables we are wont to term hurtful. But however, lest they should prove so to us, and all others useless, for want of knowledge to apply 'em, we have afforded us, in the second place, as another means,

2. The skill of the physician, whom, as the son of *Syrac* says, *God has created*, and made an honourable instrument under him to heal our diseases; all his wisdom comes from

in healing all their Diseases. 19

from him, his knowledge and sagacity are God's gifts, from whom every good and perfect one comes. Now 'tis much the same, whether any does a thing by himself alone, or thro' the service of some other instructed and appointed by him for the purpose, as the physician is by God to heal our diseases : Which, the very heathens, under the light of nature, own'd in their way ; for there's nothing more notorious, than that they imputed mens skill in any art or science to the God thereof, of which God they were therefore term'd sons and pupils : Thus in the case before us, the * Poet calls an eminent physician, *The son of Esculapius, the God of physick.* *Hom. II.

And would we but think, once, who gave us our faculties of understanding and reason, and consider these faculties moreover adapted to particular employments by the allwise Author of 'em, whereunto also men are often directed and carry'd on by a secret impulse of their nature, a divine enthusiasm, which we call a genius, and thereby arrive at greater perfection in their attainments than otherwise they would, we must at least acknowledge

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acknowledge God the foundation of our wisdom and skill. Nay, experience will farther inform us, that even our very improvements and exercise of reason are under the influence of divine providence, which turns the minds of men as it pleaseth, sometimes strangely confounding and infatuating them, otherwhile as much directing and enlightning them. *God giveth to a*

Ec. ii. 26. man that which is good in his sight, wisdom and knowledge. And again, When

he sees fit, he turneth wise men
Is. xlv. 25. backward, and maketh their know-
ledge foolish. And from hence in all like-

lihood proceed those different and even contradictory opinions of the learned in all ages, on one and the same subject, nay of the same persons at different times : So that the patient must still owe his cure to the Divine assistance, amidst the best advice and ablest consult of physicians ; and whatever benefit he receives from 'em, comes from God at second hand.

3. Another means of our health, appointed by God, is the natural constitution of human bodies, which all the outward remedies and human skill in the world could
never

in healing all their Diseases. 21

never free from a disease, unless they were fram'd with an innate force and aptness to recover themselves. Hence we feel an intestine war within us, upon the assault of a distemper, and nature's raising all her faculties and powers to oppose it, using every little spring of her machine as a weapon against it, whilst the enemy presses hard, and shocks and wounds us. Our natural constitution is always at least the foundation of our health, and other things are only helps to bring that into due order; which made *Hippocrates* call *Nature*, *The physician of diseases*. Nay this often acquaints us too what assistances it needs, by its own motions pointing out what particular remedies and methods will prove most successful against the distemper, how and in what quarter we may best attack it from without, so as to receive the benefit of its joint force within. From hence it comes to pass that moderate exercise and gentle motions are so useful in any illness; for these agitate and warm the cold sluggish faculties, when they are yielding and sinking under a distemper, and so rouse and inspirit 'em to expel it; whereby God has provided that

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every

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every man under him may be in the main his own phyfician.

4. God ordinarily heals our difeafes, by giving fuccefs to the means we ufe for this purpofe ; for be they of never fo great efficacy in themfelves, they neceffarily require his concurrence.

As 'tis in fpirituals, Paul *may plant, and Apollos water, but God giveth the increafe,* 1 Cor. iii. 6. ; fo here, the phyfician may prefcribe, and the druggift compound, and the patient be very ftrict in obferving rules ; yet unlefs God co-operates, all will be in vain.

We plainly perceive a fecret power (which we are apt to term Luck, or Chance, or Fortune ; divine Providence indeed it is) that fways in all occurrences of life, ordering and fucceeding events as it pleafes, and many times contrary to our expectations : *I faw under the fun (fays Solomon) that the race is not to the fwift, nor battel to the ftrong, &c.*

Now if we often find our endeavours over-rul'd and crofs'd, and fo to fail in the vifible world without us ; how can we expect 'em to fucceed of themfelves in the
little

in healing all their Diseases. 23

little secret world within ? which is a very dark and mazy scene, where things lie quite out of our view in their operations.

We are, certainly still ignorant of many things . (notwithstanding the discoveries made) in the frame and texture of human bodies; as the daily searches of the learned confess. We can't be so well inform'd at least how the vital motions of our bodies are perform'd, how all the subtle springs of their machines are set, and kept going, in every particular man's constitution especially. These things are visible only to Him, *who saw our substance being yet imperfect, and in whose book are all our members written,* as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. cxxxix. 16.* Upon this account then we must needs be at a great loss for the nature and cause of many distempers ; and after all our search for their symptoms from the pulse and excrement, we have but uncertain notices, and perhaps the best account comes from those spontaneous motions of our nature before-mention'd ; and being thus in the dark as to the nature and causes of distempers, we must necessarily be so too in application of the remedy. But granting this

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to be otherwise, that the remedy be suited to the disease ; yet our medicine being digested, must pass under several changes and alterations, thro' an infinite number of most nice and intricate windings and turnings (which has put some upon the airy project of injecting it into the veins and blood immediately) so that its virtues may easily miscarry, and do us harm rather than good, especially when the whole body is disorder'd. We have much more reason therefore to attribute the success of any means us'd in healing our diseases, to the Divine Providence prospering 'em, than in any other affair of the world : humanly speaking, a man may expect, with more certainty, the safe return of a ship into harbour with treasure from the farthest *Indies*, thro' all the hazards at sea, than that a medicine, thro' the various meanders of a distemper'd body, should convey health and vigour to the parts affected.

And thus I have done with the first proposition, and I hope clear'd the truth of the Psalmist's assertion, *that God healeth all our diseases* ; which I have endeavour'd to prove he does, both in his ordinary and
extraordinary

extraordinary providence over us, and so proceed,

II. To declare how this ought to affect us; which was the main end design'd in what has been hitherto spoken.

And the first consideration that readily flows from all, is this; If God be the physician who heals all our diseases, and natural means but his instruments, we ought chiefly to depend on him for their cure, and be most of all thankful to him upon our recovery,

Our chief hopes and dependence, I say, under any bodily affliction, should be in God: we ought to use all remedies, with a due regard to Him who ordains and directs them, and therefore can easily suspend or enforce their virtues, and so succeed or frustrate their operations: Nay, by his Almighty Power over our natures, he can work the blessed effect as well without 'em; and out of his tender mercies to his creatures, we have great reason to believe, when need requires, and 'tis consistent with the other ends of Providence, he will.

Now the sense of these things should take off all vain confidence and boasting in human

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human means, and fill us with an humble trust and resignation to the Divine Providence; should send the patient with ardent prayer both in publick and private, to the throne of Grace for ease and relief, and a blessing on those natural remedies he uses; and not suffer him to be like *Aſa* (2 Chron. xvi. 12.) who is reproach'd *for not seeking to the Lord, but to the physicians in his disease,* chiefly trusting in these.

And if our malady be the effect of some sin, for which God punishes us with it (as it may be oftener than people imagine) then the humbling our selves in prayer, and seeking his favour, seems the only true remedy against it; at least it can never be improper in any case. Accordingly the son of *Syrach* prescribes thus; *My son, in thy sickness be not negligent, but pray unto the Lord, and he will make thee whole.* And what St. *James* advises, has been heard before. The words of the Psalmist therefore may be a good *recipe* for us: O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: —

Ps. xxxviii.

For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh. — I am feeble and sore broken,

in healing all their Diseases. 27

broken, I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee. — For in thee, O Lord, do I hope. — Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation.

And when we find our prayers heard, and health restor'd, so great a blessing (great indeed in it self, and the fountain of all others in this life) should not want a suitable return of thanks and praise to its all-kind Author. But, alas! as great as it is, men are too apt to forget it. Most are ready enough indeed to humble themselves before God, whilst any bodily calamity is actually upon 'em; but when 'tis gone, in the very dawn of our health, our devotions too often pass away as the early dew after night. As the base Israelites of old did, so are we apt to do; *When God slew them, then they sought him, and returned and enquired early after God; and they remembred that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer: nevertheless they did but flatter him with their lips, and lyed unto him with their tongue; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.* This, I say, too often appears the practice of many amongst us,

Ps. lxxviii.
34, &c.

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us, who leave their bed of sickness, and presently pass from the *house of their own mourning*, into that of *feasting and pleasure*, and perhaps sin too, without looking back on the late evil days of sorrow, or any regard to that kind Almighty Being, who rescu'd 'em from it, *and deliver'd their soul from death*. A most impious practice this, and what may justly bring a speedy return of our malady again, and cause us to be then deny'd all succour from God, *who will*
Prov. i. *rather laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh*; because we have so wickedly despis'd his former goodness.

And here among our returns, we should not forget that principal one of charity and bounty to the poor; *with such sacrifices*, God tells us, *he is well pleased*, Heb. xiii. 16. and therefore they are the likeliest to continue and prosper our health to us.

2dly. If God be so merciful to us as to heal all our diseases, this ought (as our Saviour speaks in another case) to make us do all we can to heal one another: It should affect us with the like care and tenderness of our afflicted brethren (those especially

in healing all their Diseases. 29

especially whose poverty and wants redouble their misery, and add a heavy load of grief to their sorrow) that God takes of us, that so we may fulfil our duty to our great Lord, in *having compassion on our fellow-servants, as he has pity on us.* Wherein God proposes his own example for our pattern in works of mercy; and if we refuse to imitate him in this great instance, 'tis not likely we should be very forward to do it in others of less moment. *The healing mens diseases* is the best office we can do them, with relation to this world, the greatest token of our love and kindness; for 'tis laying a foundation for the whole comfort of their future life here, and therefore calls for all we can do towards it. Our attendance, and care, and pains, and bounty too, if needed, are requir'd in promoting so blessed a work: And 'tis evident we may prove very instrumental herein; for tho' God chiefly effects the cure, yet he is pleas'd most times to make man serviceable to him in it. All those medicines he has so richly endow'd Nature with, are so many means laid before us for our industry to improve to this end; and by affording 'em

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30 *God's Benefits to Mankind,*

in such great variety, he calls upon us to be as variously imploy'd in benefiting one another by them; which indeed is an undertaking so truly noble, that methinks we should need little, besides the glory and reward of the action, to excite us thereunto; both which are very great. Next the saving mens souls, *healing their bodies* (which is a kind of salvation too) is the greatest thing can be done for them; and so has the second honour due to it. 'Tis an universal benefit as well as the other; men of all conditions, high and low, rich and poor are blessed in it; and therefore 'tis alike principally attributed, by the Psalmist here, to God; — (*Who forgiveth thine iniquities, and who healeth all thy diseases.*) By imitating him herein then, we do a truly divine and heavenly deed, which must needs therefore be follow'd with a suitable reward. *God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love*, says the author to the *Hebrews*, Heb. vi. 18. His faithfulness engages him to recompence us to the uttermost, who has promis'd, that *to the merciful he will be merciful*. Every drop of comfort then, which we administer to a
weak

in healing all their Diseases. 31

weak fainting neighbour, may be reckon'd a cordial stor'd up in Heaven for us, against the time of our own languishment to come; which, in return for our goodness, we shall receive heighten'd and improv'd from the hand of the Divine Physician. But our full recompence will come at the last day, when the great Judge of all the world shall pronounce that gracious sentence, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom, &c. Mat. xxv. 36.* for among other good deeds that ye have done, this is a great one, *viz. When I was sick ye visited me. Well done therefore, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

Now the consideration of this *exceeding and eternal weight of glory* for our pains, should make us gladly embrace every opportunity of thus doing good, should take off all averfeness to go into the *house of mourning*, all our nicety and squeamishness that keep us from beholding the sore calamities of our poor brethren; for should God deal thus with us, what would become of us? Should he disregard and scorn us, *when the whole head is sick, and the heart faint; when from the sole of the foot even*

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unto the head, there is no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, where should we have ease? Let the example therefore of our most gracious Lord, together with a sense of our duty and reward thereupon, fill us with a ready zeal to imitate him in so blessed a work, as healing mens diseases is.

3dly. If God heals all mens diseases, and affords 'em so many remedies in the course of nature for it; this may serve to shew us the great wickedness of abusing them to mens hurt and ruin, or engrossing them to our own private advantage, and should therefore affect us with a dread of God's displeasure on such impious practices.

Let us reflect with horror on the fatal consequence to ourselves, as well as others, of ignorantly meddling, and vainly tampering and trying rash experiments with medicines, which, if rightly apply'd, are a great benefit to mankind, but otherwise may prove as much an injury. This mischievous *boasting of things beyond our own line*, therefore, to the great prejudice of Providence, in thus perverting its gracious designs, and often the ruin of our neighbour,

in healing all their Diseases. 33

bour, can't but highly incense God against us, and move him to return a double portion of that misery and sorrow on our own heads, we have so wickedly brought on others. As conscientious also ought men to be in distributing these remedies, according to God's purpose in them, for the publick good ; and not out of vanity and pride retain 'em wholly to themselves, or thro' exaction and covetousness fix such extravagant prices on 'em, as will lock 'em up from the generality of mankind, which is an impious wresting God's instruments of good to his creatures, out of his hand : 'Tis robbing our poor brethren of the most valuable treasures of life, nay, 'tis exercising over 'em the severest cruelty, whilst they expose 'em to the savage tyranny of death, the bloody enemy of mankind, which they do, by retaining those fetters that should chain and hold him fast ; which complicated iniquity will certainly meet with a full reward, when God shall take upon him to *avenge the cause of the poor and needy, and break in pieces the oppressor.* Not that I speak this in any wise to deprive the labourer herein of his hire,
but

34 *God's Benefits to Mankind,*

but to let him know, that this hire ought to be proportion'd, as much as may be, to mens circumstances, and never prove so excessive as to bring any into the poor ruin'd widow's hopeless case in the Gospel (*Luke the vth*) which stands a brand on all exaction of that nature. Neither am I reflecting on the noble faculty of physick, or any worthy professor of it, whom we ought to honour with the honour due unto him, as the son of *Syrach* speaks. His praise is a debt upon us, a just tribute of that breath which under God he continues to us: 'Tis not from such (whose deep insight into the wonders of Nature, can't but fill 'em with an awful sense of its Almighty Author, and due regard to his gracious designs to mankind) we fear any thing; but that tribe of pretenders, who making a trade of Providence, live on the sorrows, and thrive on the miseries of mankind; who ought to consider, that they are but fattening for the slaughter, and that as they have done, so God may one day requite 'em.

4thly. If it be God that heals our diseases, and so keeps the *issues of life and death* in his own power, this should oblige us, as we

in healing all their Diseases. 35

we value our present, as well as future welfare, to be very careful not to offend him, and give him any cause to cast us out of his favour, and with-hold his mercy from us in the time of our sickness, when we have so much need of him ; especially should it make us fly all debauchery and excess, and avoid thus running our selves, like beasts, into the snares of those distempers, out of which we have very little reason to expect the Divine deliverance.

Under such diseases as come upon us in the course of Providence, we may depend on God's aid ; but as to those, that are the natural consequence and sad effect of our sins, there's little succour to be hop'd from Heaven for 'em. Should God be very gracious to such wretches, 'twould look like countenancing 'em, which we can't think an infinitely holy, pure and just Governor of the world will ordinarily do ; but that he will rather cast 'em off, and declare in the words of *Wisdom* (Prov. i.) *They shall call, but I'll not hear, &c.*

And when once God forsakes us, in vain we seek to natural remedies, which have their efficacy from him, for the cure of
our

36 *God's Benefits to Mankind,*

our diseases : these, without the divine blessing, serve only to feed our sorrow, increase our misery, and prolong our woe; as may be seen in many a decrepid wretch, whose *wickednesses have gone over his head, and are like a sore burden too heavy for him to bear.* To behold such a one in his long and sad course of penance, living upon misery, eating the *bread of affliction* his sins have carv'd for him, and drinking the bitter potions his iniquities have mixt, and even *sucking out the dregs of the cup of God's fury*, ever uneasy, restless and complaining, *in the morning, would God it were evening, and in the evening, would God it were morning*; a sight of this, I say, may sufficiently warn us to fly those courses of vileness that will lead us into the same condition, persuading us to hearken to *Solomon's* advice, Prov. i. 10. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not* : Or when he speaks more particularly, chap. xxiii. ver. 31. cautioning us, *not to look upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup, when it moveth it self aright*; for, at last, it *biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.* And again, chap. vii. ver. 24. &c. where he gives

in healing all their Diseases. 37

gives an account of the *strange woman*, whose house, he says, is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

And let us consider too that these excesses should be particularly avoided in those places, where God makes the means of our welfare abound and overflow to us; here, out of a common respect to his goodness, so present with us, we ought to live under an awe and reverence of him. 'Twill be a most daring impiety then to pollute these gracious springs of life by our corruptions, and what may not only suspend their virtues from us, but also cause their Almighty Lord to make the diseases, cleans'd away from others herein, cleave to us and our posterity, as *Naaman's* leprosy did to the Prophet's servant on a less provocation.

'Tis a master-piece of the devil's policy, my brethren, to be busiest with his temptations, where God is shewing himself most gracious, that so he may not only hinder the Divine Goodness working any effect upon us, but bring us moreover into the most impious contempt and defiance of God. Since therefore we are not ignorant of his devices, let us take care not to be

38 *God's Benefits to Mankind,*

infnar'd by 'em ; where-ever God's loving kindness and mercies furround us, let us there especially *shew our chaste conversation coupled with fear*, 1 Pet. iii. 2. *Let us walk honestly, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying ; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*, Rom. xiii. 13. 14.

5thly. What has been said on this subject ought to affect us all with a deep and lively sense of God's wonderful mercies and loving kindness to mankind, in that he not only provides for the safety of our souls, the better part of us, and more worthy his care, but our bodies also, *our vile bodies*, as the Apostle calls 'em, that have nothing desirable in 'em, being full of defilement and corruption : That the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth should so condescend in his mercy to behold these, and behold 'em in their worst condition too, when they are diseas'd, and their defilements most abominable, shews his great tenderness and care, and love for us. Did God take care only to sustain us in our health, he would acquit himself as a *faithful Creator* ; but

now

in healing all their Diseases. 39

now that he heals all our diseases likewise, those evils that are the effects of our apostacy from him, and rebellion against him; that even in his extraordinary Providence he thus *watches over us for our good*, and makes the whole lower creation administer remedies to this end, is a token of his abundant favour and overflowing goodness to us, a most surprising instance how mightily his *Mercy is over all his works*.

Good God ! what a scene of misery and woe would this world have been, had men been left to languish and pine away in their diseases without a remedy ? What ghastly spectacles of mortality would then every where affright us ? How would the doleful cries, the moans and lamentations of our poor brethren wound our ears, and grieve our hearts, and render our lives uncomfortable in the best condition ? But now, since God has order'd matters quite otherwise, how should it fill us with a due sense of his goodness, and never suffer us to *forget* so great a *benefit* ?

To conclude : Whilst we bear these frail mortal bodies about with us, let us look upon 'em as so many monuments of

40 *God's Benefits to Mankind, &c.*

the Almighty's care and love for us. Those infirmities, decays, and weakneses and sorrows they are ever liable to, should call upon us to spend that life, and health, and vigour God sends, to his praise and glory, in a virtuous, holy and exemplary conversation, that so we may live like those whom Heaven has so extremely oblig'd in body as well as soul : *Which God grant we may, for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord ; To whom, &c.*

The END of the SERMON.



A
LETTER
From the Late
Dr. Richard Bettenson,
OF THE
BATH,
Concerning His
SUCCESSFUL METHOD
OF
Giving WINE, &c.
IN THE
SMALL-POX.

WITH
Some RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS on
that Presumptive Practice of
INOCULATING It.

LONDON:
Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXVIII.

A
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Dr. Richard B. Benson

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Some Remarks on
the Prescriptive Practice of
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A
L E T T E R

From the Late

Dr. Richard Bettenfon, &c.



THE following Letter is ('bating the contraction of some names) a true copy of what the late worthy *Dr. Richard Bettenfon*, of the *Bath*, was pleas'd to communicate to me, upon my consulting him in a case of the *Small-Pox*, and acquainting him how much the general practice ran against giving Wine, or any spirituous liquor in that distemper, for fear of increasing the fever, which was look'd upon as mortal. To obviate this mistaken opinion, and regulate people's practice, the Doctor wrote as follows:

S I R,

S I R,

I Doubt the fears of the Apothecary and Women will do harm in this Case ; I advise as before, the Sack-whey, half Sack half Milk ; in great weakness of the spirits, Wine alone, of the sort that is most agreeable ; by my order some have drank one, or two, or three quarts in 24 hours ; which made a great noise. In the year Arch-D. H— came hither, he told the people he had drank Wine against the rules of Dr. M. or he was sure he had dy'd ; and my patients being all sav'd by my method of Wine, as their common drink, brought the people into a better opinion of the method ; and the seeing people dying on each side, in cases more favourable than that of my patients, made them think, tho' the way was new, yet 'twas the better. If the Fever is not kept up, the * patient must go down ; for a strong blood will carry the matter to the skin and extreme parts ; a weak blood will lapse down upon the head or breast, whence comes an Apoplexy or an Asthma, both equally

* According to the Doctor, the Fever sinking, the Pox also sunk with it, and then he gave Wine in quantities.

dangerous

dangerous and killing. I never lost any one that was regular in my method. At Lord P——t's, two years since, I secured nine people by the same; when they drank Wine plentifully, the disorders you mention in the head, throat, with spitting, &c. went all off, to the surprize of my Lord. The chief servants, seeing it succeed so well, said, They wonder'd what other Doctors had been thinking of, when this alone answer'd the most difficult and dangerous complaints. The bleeding and purging, &c. have had ill success in London, and bleeding and purging about the 10th or 11th day, have lost the lives of many. Giving the Blood more life and strength, is the only rational way to secure people, as I told you before. There is a deadness in the Blood, in great numbers of people, that Wine won't raise but in great quantities; this deadness is common in the Plague too, and requires Brandy; which secures people in this distemper beyond other things; but this method must be accommodated to the person, and 'tis few in either disease that find it disagreeable.

I thought to write the more to give you the reason of the thing, that, in a great many people, has been clear, in experience.

The Bishop of B. and W's Grandson, with his skin all blue, with black spots, was secur'd by the method above-mention'd. If she is thirsty let her drink Beer, or what she likes, to allay her drought. Perhaps the Apothecary and Women will not come into the notion, but some Women of this Town have succeeded with it, when the country Doctors have given up the cause.

*I think I have almost tir'd you and myself.
I am,*

S I R,

Your Most Humble Servant,

Bath, Feb. 7.

1721-2.

RICHARD BETTENSON.

P. S. In great want of sleep, &c. Laudanum may be given, 8 or 10 drops or more, as it operates, and twice a day upon occasion ; but the Evening is the better time, unless the disquiet is great in the day and the night too ; then 'tis necessary Morning and Evening.

As

As for the reasonableness of the Doctor's method, or rather that disputatious account some may require of it ; I confess I have not skill enough (it being none of my province) to defend it against objections ; it must speak for itself on this head : All I can say is, upon some experience, I've found it very successful ; the Apothecary also (hinted at in the Letter) who now uses it, can attest as much ; and he's the better able to judge in the case, because his practice before was quite otherwise, and so the success prov'd accordingly ; and the Doctor himself gives instances. So that here's fact, which is beyond argument, and I offer nothing more, leaving people to judge upon trial.

The Reader is desir'd to accept the Letter, under that plain dress the Doctor was pleas'd to put it in, as most suitable to private instruction ; the only end he design'd it for. 'Tis however made publick for the general good, and therefore, without any injury, 'tis presum'd, to the Doctor's memory. It appears also at a season, I hope

not altogether unsuitable, now that this distemper is reigning amongst us; which looks like the correcting Hand of Heaven, for our many iniquities, especially that infidel Practice of Inoculation, lately crept in hither from an infidel country, and too much encourag'd in our nation, where, alas for us! infidelity is no stranger, and therefore the practice more easily found footing amongst us.

Thus *as we have done, is God rewarding us.* We will have the Small-Pox, when and how we please, endeavouring to prevent God's chastising us with it, and frustrate the ends of his Providence therein, and so he's giving us our fill, and that, 'tis to be fear'd, with the greater malignity. Pray God the Plague does not follow, to convince us, that Divine Providence has yet a distemper in store to humble us.

And we seem hereby to imitate the *scornful Jews* heretofore, (who are examples of God's Judgments to us, and ought to be more regarded, than generally they are by a supine, sinful people) when they said,

We

We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass thro', it shall not come unto us. For which prophane presumption God thus threatens 'em: Your covenant with death shall be disanull'd, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass thro', then ye shall be trodden down by it.

Is. xxviii.
15, &c.

By the method before set down, it appears, how kind and ready a provision Divine Providence has made for our safety in the Small-Pox, relieving our languishing spirits under it with a *Natural Cordial*, so the Doctor us'd to term Wine. What great reason then have we to trust God herein, being duly content and thankful for his goodness, and not run into such perverse, and impious methods of mere human contrivance, as directly tend to wrest God's sovereign power of life and death out of his hands, destroy all our dependance on him, and even set us up against him, as 'twill appear hereafter.

Now

Now diseases are those great instruments whereby God exercises his power of life and death over mankind, and so keeps 'em in awe of him ; the bringing these diseases upon ourselves then, in order to escape death from 'em, by plucking out, as it were, their sting, (and he who does it in one instance, is ready to do it in all, on occasion) is plainly to interfere with God in this exercise of his power, and even usurp it from him ; by which means we shall soon lose all his fear in our hearts.

The Scripture is so full of our trust and dependance on God, under any distemper, that we cannot miss of many instructions and examples of holy men, in the case, all most evidently inconsistent with the evil practice before us.

And they may serve as so many reproofs of it. How severely then may we believe God reprehends it, when he reproves *Asa* for *not seeking to him, but the physicians* ? How inconsistent is the case with *St. James's* order ? Is
any

2 Chron.
xvi. 12.

any sick among you, let him send for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, &c. v. 14, 15. As for the Elders of ours, let any judge, whether they can anyways conscientiously administer in the case, according to our office, which runs thus :

Dearly beloved, know this, that Almighty God is Lord of life and death, and of all things to them pertaining, as — weakness and sickness. Wherefore whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that 'tis God's visitation. — And render him humble thanks for his fatherly visitation, &c.

Now I take it, the minister cannot in any truth and uprightness exhort the inoculated person in these words ; he has therefore no right to the Church's ministration ; and whoever throws himself into such a condition, under a distemper, where the prayers of the church cannot reach him, is out of God's protection with a witness, and in a worse case than even an honest Heathen, having indeed less piety in him ; for the Heathens generally deify their diseases, which

which was a tacit acknowledgement of the over-ruling power of Divine Providence therein, and their absurd way of declaring the univereal consent of mankind in the matter. Our Christian, by the practice before us, in fact, denies all this, and so stands condemn'd by the whole world, and must expect to find the very Gentiles, at last, rise up in judgment against him.

Let us a little farther consider the nature of this distemper, and that spiritual good we may believe God designs us by it.

The distemper is a particular scourge God keeps for us, so near at hand, that 'tis even in our own bowels. 'Tis a severe *rebuke he chastens men with, for sin*; and therefore does it, in its original, come more immediately from him, than other diseases, that generally proceed from some accidental ill turn, and indisposition of the bodily humours; but for this there seems no natural cause to be assign'd; we are born, in all likelihood, with the seeds of it in us; 'tis a particular radical corruption we bring into the world with us: therefore when once

'tis

'tis work'd off, in a course of Providence, are we never subject to it more. A particular instance of the Divine Goodness, that we suffer so severe a chastisement but once.

Now if we consider the distemper in this notion of it, (which seems to be true) we shall likely be kept in a constant awe and fear of God, before he afflicts us with it; remain in a due trust and dependance on his help, together with a patient submission to his Divine Will under it; and after he shall be graciously pleased to recover us, by the means of his Providence, from it, will it naturally leave such a grateful sense of his goodness on our minds, as shall extend itself thro' our whole lives, exciting us to live to his praise and glory, and spend the remainder of those days we owe to his mercy, in his service.

These are the good effects, this distemper, rightly consider'd, as a particular instrument of God's Providence, a signal corrective in his hands, (more especially design'd as such) to afflict us with, naturally

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tends

tends to work in us. All which are frustrated by this evil practice of bringing it upon ourselves, in order to escape its Force : For in this case must we look upon it, as purely the effect of a mere natural cause only, wholly submitting to natural means, and altogether under the management of human art; this makes us little regard to wait God's time in sending it, or his help for our recovery, and to thank him when 'tis over : Nay, now we rather in a manner defy him, thinking ourselves out of his reach : We vainly fancy we have a new lease of our lives, or rather are lords proprietors of 'em, saying in our hearts, *We shall not be removed, we shall never be in adversity*, so we set to gratify our lusts, and fearless launch out into a most profligate course of life.

I take this practice then, not only to be evil in itself, but also to have a very ill influence on peoples lives and conversations, tending to introduce infidelity and licentiousness amongst us. For which reason all good Christians ought loudly to declare against it, and detest it; and that we do not find persons generally doing thus,

I look upon it as a great sign we live in an infidel, licentious age.

Let us once more consider, that this practice carries the highest folly in it, (as indeed all wickedness does) being a most unlikely means to preserve our lives in general. For (not to mention that some have died under the very operation, and so been their own executioners, which none therefore can be certain will not be their own most deplorable case) are there not innumerable other severe diseases to dispatch us? Why should not a Fever or Dropsy then do, what the Small-Pox might have done? And has our escaping this distemper, after this manner, any efficacy to prevent others? Surely not. Nay, may we not rather suspect the contrary? That the whole contagion will not be drawn off this superficial way (which seems to be like hastening a birth, and so it is but a kind of abortion; 'tis at best the bungling work of Art, nothing comparable to the efficacy of Nature) the remainder of which, through a preternatural tampering with the humours, may poison the constitution,

tution, and so convert to some malignant disease one time or other.

But the great consideration is, Has a man any good grounds to expect the Divine protection of Providence (our only security) in one case, having despis'd it in another? Whoever thinks so, must have strange mistaken notions of Divine Providence. Alas! 'tis justly to be fear'd our inoculated person, who runs counter to the ways of God's Providence, by such an impious perverseness, takes the most likely method to be thrown out of all its protection, and provoke God to let loose the whole troop of diseases upon him, to *cut him off*, and not permit him to *live out half his days*, as the wicked are threatned.

And it very much behoves such an one farther to dread, whether he may not be intitled to that general curse pronounced by God;

Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm,

arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord, Jer. vii. 5.

Here therefore I recommend it again to all peoples serious thoughts, whether if this evil practice should prevail and grow general amongst us, it might not justly incense God (who usually adapts punishments to crimes) to bring the Plague upon us.

This dreadful distemper seems to be but a greater degree of the Small-Pox, at least to carry much of its contagion in it; should God then heighten the malignity of this into that, would he not justly reward us as we have done, and shew an exemplary judgment, every way suitable to our impious perverseness.

See the whole matter in a familiar instance: A father keeps a rod to chastize his rebellious son; the son steals it, and, with a very partial hand, lays it on himself, not without a kind of derision of his father; then he breaks the rod, and defies the father's correction with it for the future.

ture. What is like to come of all this, but that the father, in vindication of his injur'd authority, should make a much greater to chastise his son's most impudent disobedience with ?

And now if these reasons be well consider'd, I hope there will appear no grounds for any excuses, and pretences in the case. Should any yet pretend to excuse themselves, by saying, 'Tis necessary, to qualify 'em for business and employment in the world, that they should get well over this distemper, and therefore take the course before us ; I desire 'em to consider, if it be business of duty in their calling, they ought to act in it conscientiously, with a trust to God's Providence, whom they serve therein, and so may they depend on his protection.

But if it be business purely of gain, this affords no Christian argument for any thing, unless it be, that people ought to be content without it.

If

If it be pretended farther, that this practice be only a kind of remedy to prevent the malignant force of the distemper over us, not to mention its opposition to God, before spoken of, this is strangely to confound the nature of things, and make the Disease and Remedy the same, which in a course of Providence (our only guide) are quite different; and whoever dares to pervert it, strives with his Maker, and must expect one time or other to suffer severely for so flagrant an impiety.

F I N I S.



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